



## Literacy difficulties parent/carer information sheet

### What are literacy difficulties<sup>1</sup>?

Literacy difficulties are defined as issues with any or all of the following areas:

Reading (decoding)

Reading (comprehension)

Writing

Spelling

Children begin to learn literacy skills in early years and continue through primary school. Literacy difficulties can occur in children of all abilities.

### What causes literacy difficulties?

Literacy difficulties can be related to a number of other difficulties but it is often not possible to work out one cause. Literacy can be related to difficulties with:

Thinking skills e.g. working memory (holding information in mind)

Attention

Phonological awareness (awareness of sounds in spoken language)

Language skills

Well-being issues e.g. anxiety

Fine motor skills

Environment issues e.g. low school attendance

It is important if children are presenting with multiple difficulties that all issues are addressed.

### What can literacy difficulties affect?

Literacy difficulties can affect other areas, such as:

Coping with emotions

Self-esteem

Motivation

Attention

How much these are affected will vary from child to child and adult support (in school and outside school) can help a child cope with these difficulties. Literacy difficulties can have a big impact on academic progress, life skills and a successful move into adult life so it is important that school and parents / carers work together to support the child.

### Support in school

It is often helpful for children with literacy difficulties to receive support in the classroom and outside the classroom. This will give children the chance to learn and practice literacy skills at their current level. Children with literacy difficulties and / or gaps in knowledge often need more time at earlier stages of learning so do talk to your child's class teacher to find out how your child is being supported.

---

<sup>1</sup> In this information sheet literacy difficulties includes the diagnosis of dyslexia, specific literacy difficulties and current experiences of literacy difficulties.

Applied Psychologies is the trading name of CRAIGLAMB Ltd.  
Company number 08188796. VAT Registration Number: 154 1641 29

Hull office:  
Liverpool office:  
@AppPsych

Hesslewood Hall, Ferriby Road, Hessle, HU13 0LH  
14 Staplands Road, Liverpool, L14 3LL  
info@appliedpsychologies.com

tel: 01482 643458  
tel: 0151 9234062

www.appliedpsychologies.com



## Strategies for home

These are examples of strategies for children with literacy difficulties that can be used by parents and carers. However, every child is different so parents and carers should carefully consider which strategies to use. The parent or carer can also contact support (information below).

### General

1. Give a small number of instructions and write them down or draw them.
2. Give your child extra time to process information and repeat information if they need it.

### Reading (decoding)

1. Use a 'paired reading' approach when your child is reading a book (adult and child reads together and when child wants to read some on their own they tap to start then they tap again for adult to join in). More information: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RJmXBQ59sxE>.
2. Reduce information on worksheets, for example write out a small number of questions on a separate piece of paper or cut worksheets in half.

### Reading (comprehension)

1. Ask your child to circle words they don't understand then explain what they mean. If you do not know make it a task for you both to find out and talk to your child about how you might do this.
2. When asking your child about their reading use a small number of structured questions starting with simple questions to raise confidence. For example:
  - a) Two literal questions (questions about the content of the story, for example 'where did the characters go?' or 'how many pigs are in the story?')
  - b) Two inferential questions (questions that ask the child about meaning, for example 'why do you think the character was sad?' or 'where do you think the child wanted to go?')
  - c) One personal response question (for example: 'what did you like about the story?' or 'what would you have done to get out of the hole?')

### Spelling

1. When your child is going to do a longer piece of writing ask them what 'tricky' words they might need and write them down for your child to refer to.
2. Help your child plan an answer and write their ideas in bullet points for them to use when writing

### Writing

Give your child different ways of recording information, for example:

Cut up information / sentences for your child to organise.	Your child matches labels to diagrams or pictures	Your child record ideas using ICT e.g. laptops, iPads, voice recording
Your child says their ideas out loud for you to write down.	Your child creates posters, drawings or photographs.	Write down the beginnings of sentences for your child to finish.

### Motivation / self esteem

1. Praise your child for effort they put into work more than achievements.
2. Use your child's interests when planning an activity for them or helping them with activities.

Local Authority support: <a href="https://www.knowsleyinfo.co.uk/categories/covid-19-news-send">https://www.knowsleyinfo.co.uk/categories/covid-19-news-send</a>	Childline (for your child): 08001111 (9am – midnight)
The SENCO at your child's school	111 for health concerns or 999 if an emergency

Information written by Dr Francesca Heffernan (educational psychologist) May 2020 for parents and carers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Applied Psychologies is the trading name of CRAIGLAMB Ltd.  
Company number 08188796. VAT Registration Number: 154 1641 29

Hull office:	Hesslewood Hall, Ferriby Road, Hessle, HU13 0LH	tel: 01482 643458
Liverpool office:	14 Staplands Road, Liverpool, L14 3LL	tel: 0151 9234062
@AppPsych	info@appliedpsychologies.com	www.appliedpsychologies.com